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around a toadstool table

around a toadstool table

A CHILD'S BOOK OF VERSE

Written by
ROWENA BASTIN BENNETT

With Pictures by
LUCILLE WEBSTER HOLLING



THOMAS S. ROCKWELL COMPANY
CHICAGO
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TO THE MOTHER
WHO MADE MY
CHILDHOOD A
DELIGHT AND
TO THE CHILDREN
WHO MAKE MY
MOTHERHOOD
A JOY

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AROUND A TOADSTOOL TABLE

Around a toadstool table
I dine with fairy kings;
Across the moon-white hilltops
I dance in fairy rings;
And when I sleep, I nestle
Where fairies fold their wings.





UNDER THE TENT OF THE SKY

The wind cracked his whip,
The storm flashed a gun,
And the animal-clouds marched one by one
Under the tent of the sky.



There were elephants, blue,
And shaggy white bears,
And dozens and dozens of prancing gray mares
With their beautiful heads held high.



There were soft-footed panthers
And ostriches, fluffy,
And a great hippopotamus, purple and puffy,
Who wallowed in mud-colored mist.

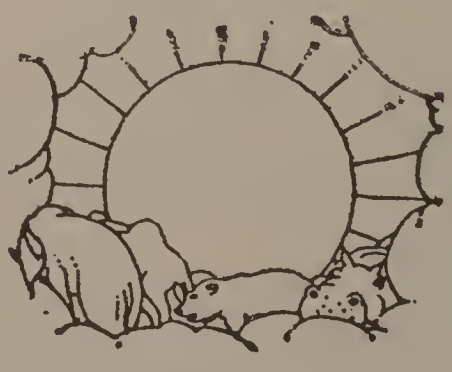


There were small curly dogs
And camels with humps
And a wrinkled rhinoceros, all over bumps,
With a horn as big as your fist.

There was even a lion
Bedecked with a mane
Who growled so loud that he turned into rain
And tumbled to earth with a sigh.



The wind cracked his whip
And out came the sun
And the animal-clouds passed one by one
Out of the tent of the sky.





THE RAIN

The rain, they say, is a mouse-gray horse
 That is shod with a silver shoe;
The sound of his hoofs can be heard on the roofs
 As he gallops the whole night through.

MEETING THE EASTER BUNNY

On Easter morn at early dawn
before the cocks were crowing,
I met a bob-tail bunnykin
and asked where he was going,
" 'Tis in the house and out the house
a-tipsy, tipsy-toeing,
'Tis round the house and 'bout the house
a-lightly I am going."
"But what is that of every hue
you carry in your basket?"
" 'Tis eggs of gold and eggs of blue;
I wonder that you ask it.
'Tis chocolate eggs and bonbon eggs
and eggs of red and gray,
For every child in every house
on bonny Easter Day."





He perked his ears and winked his eye
and twitched his little nose;
He shook his tail—what tail he had—
and stood up on his toes.
"I must be gone before the sun;
the east is growing gray;
'Tis almost time for bells to chime."—
So he hippety-hopped away.

MAYING SONG

Come Maying,
Come playing,

Dear lassies, blithe and fair!
The bud has burst, the leaf is green,
There is no time to spare!
Sweet May has walked across the hills
And scattered them with daffodils.



Come singing,
Come bringing
Your baskets bright and gay,
And we shall hold a carnival
To greet the lovely May.

Bring garlands, spring garlands,
To strew the waiting street;
And let none pipe who can't impart
The magic to our feet;
And let none sing who cannot sing
Sweetly as Pierrot,
For May's as young and soft of tongue
As in the long ago.

So out and in, and out and in
We'll dance as light as Harlequin;
And in her robes of Lincoln green,
Sweet May herself will be our queen.



RUBBER BOOTS

Little boots and big boots,
Traveling together
On the shiny sidewalks,
In the rainy weather,
Little boots and big boots,
Oh, it must be fun
To splash the silver raindrops
About you as you run,
Or scatter bits of rainbow
Beneath the April sun!

Big boots and little boots,
You know how it feels
To have the white clouds drifting
Far below your heels;
And it is dizzy pleasure,
Along the way to school,
To walk the lacy tree tops
That lie in every pool.

Little boots and big boots,
How you like to putter
In every slender streamlet
That scampers down the gutter!

How you like to dabble
Where the current crinkles
And fill the flowing water
With new and wider wrinkles;
Or stir the yellow clay up
To sudden, cloudy puffs
That dull the shining surface
With muddy browns or buffs.

Big boots and little boots,
Travel on together,
Merrily go splashing
Through April's rainy weather!

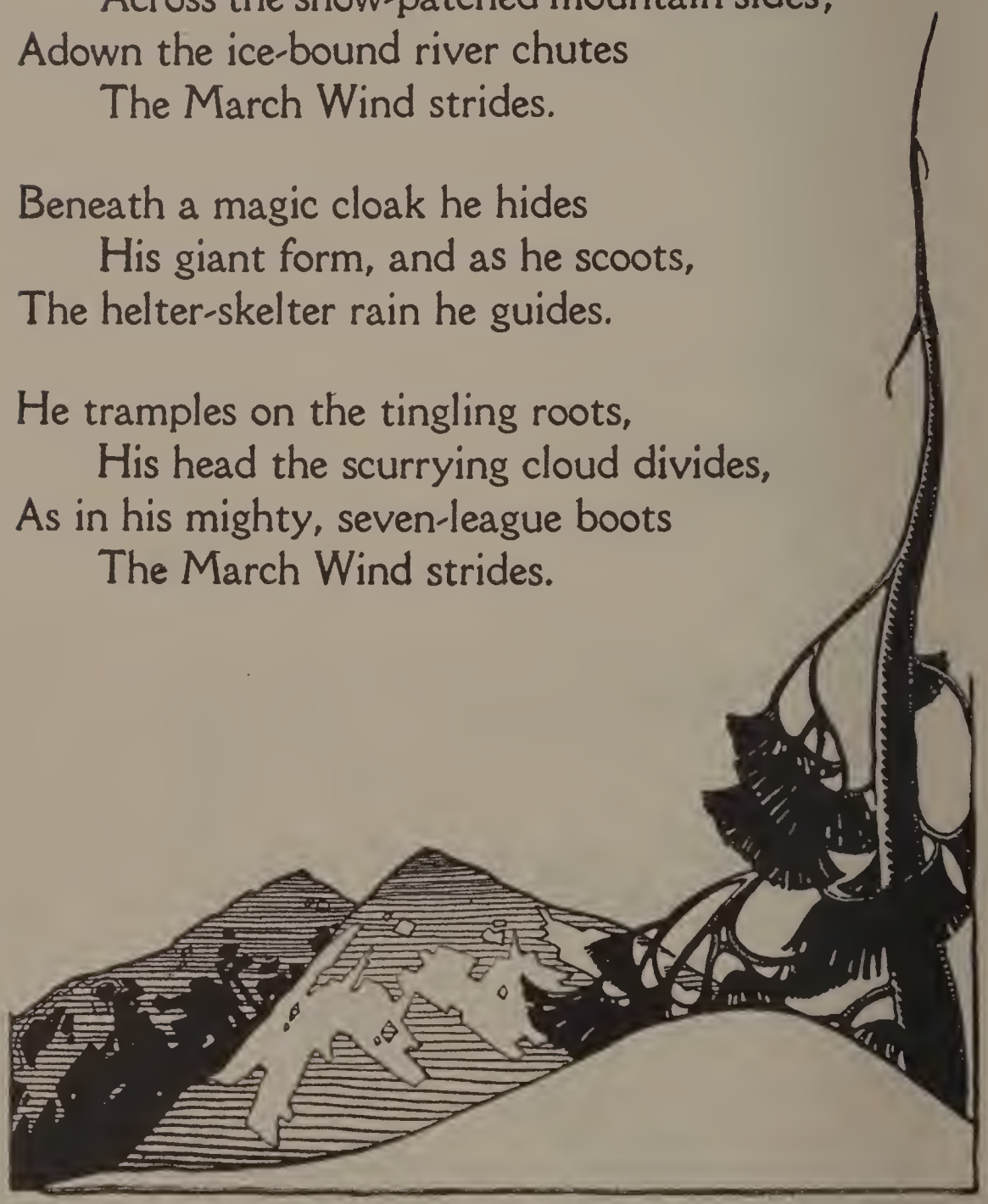


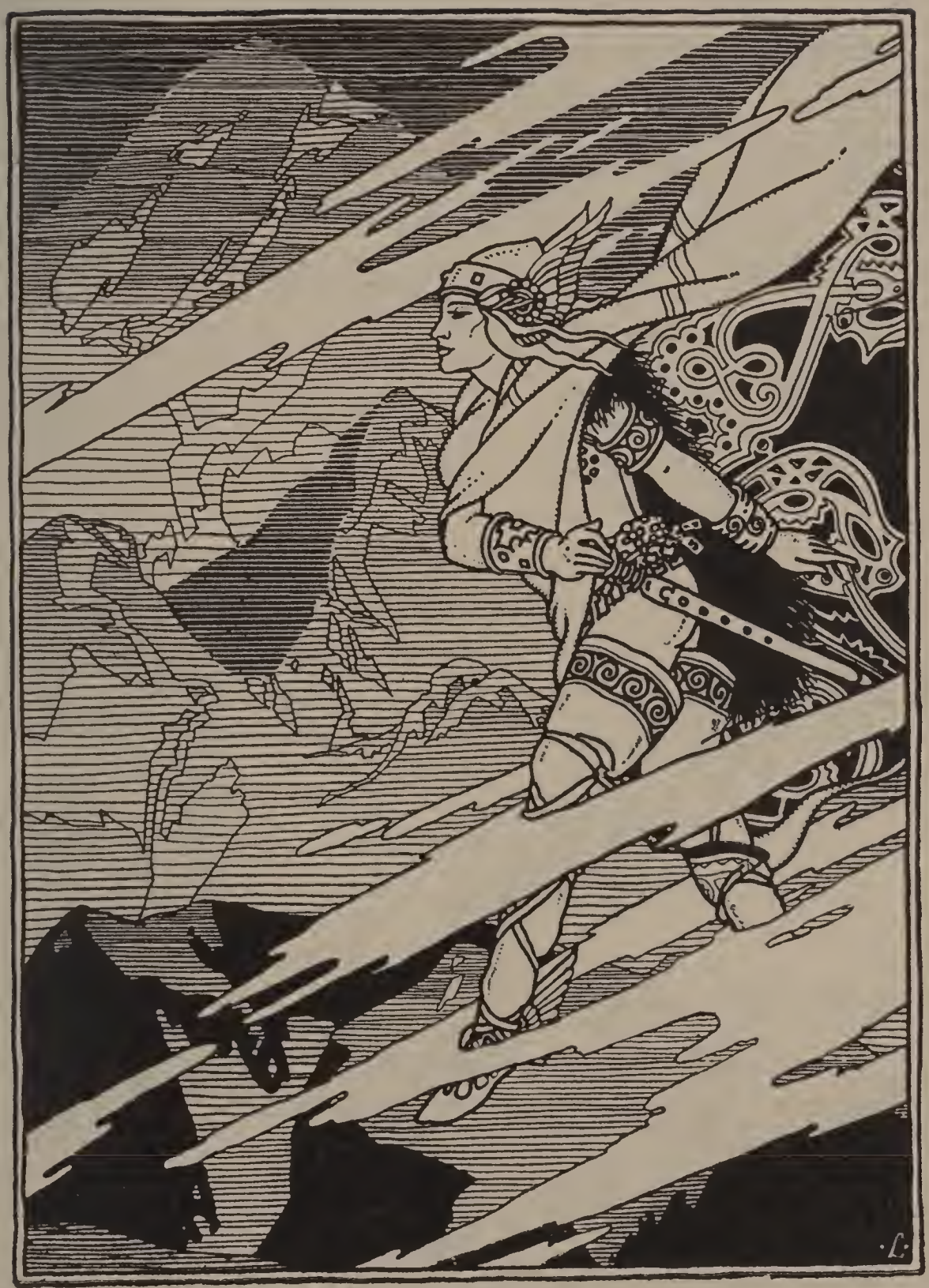
THE WIND GIANT

The March Wind strides in seven-league boots
Across the snow-patched mountain sides;
Adown the ice-bound river chutes
The March Wind strides.

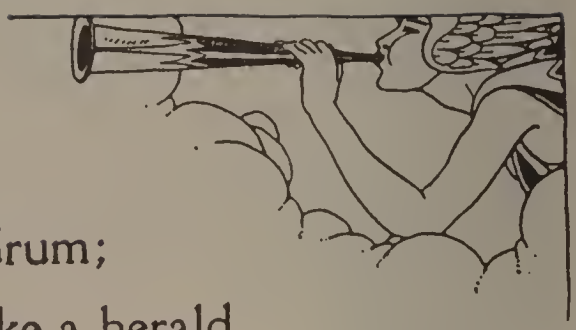
Beneath a magic cloak he hides
His giant form, and as he scoots,
The helter-skelter rain he guides.

He tramples on the tingling roots,
His head the scurrying cloud divides,
As in his mighty, seven-league boots
The March Wind strides.





SPRING CARNIVAL

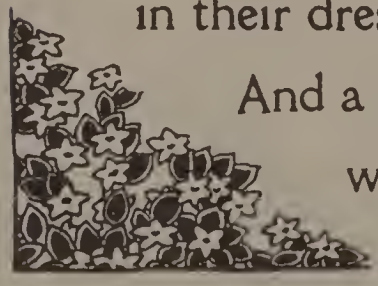


The wind blew his bugle,
the rain beat his drum;
The sun, like a herald,
cried joyfully, "Come!
"Come to the carnival,
Spring."

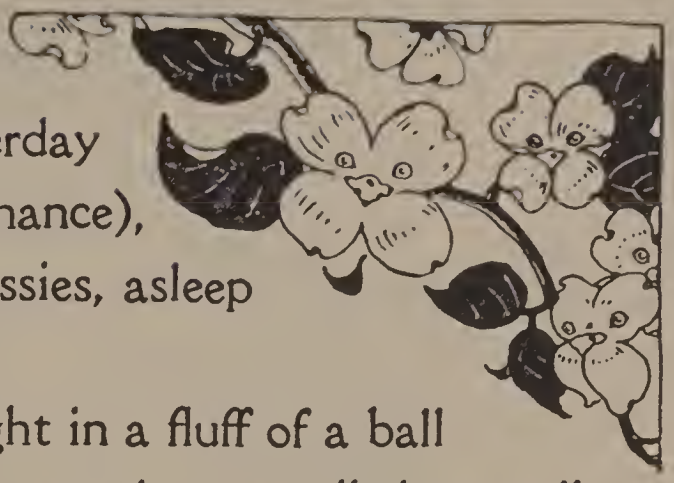




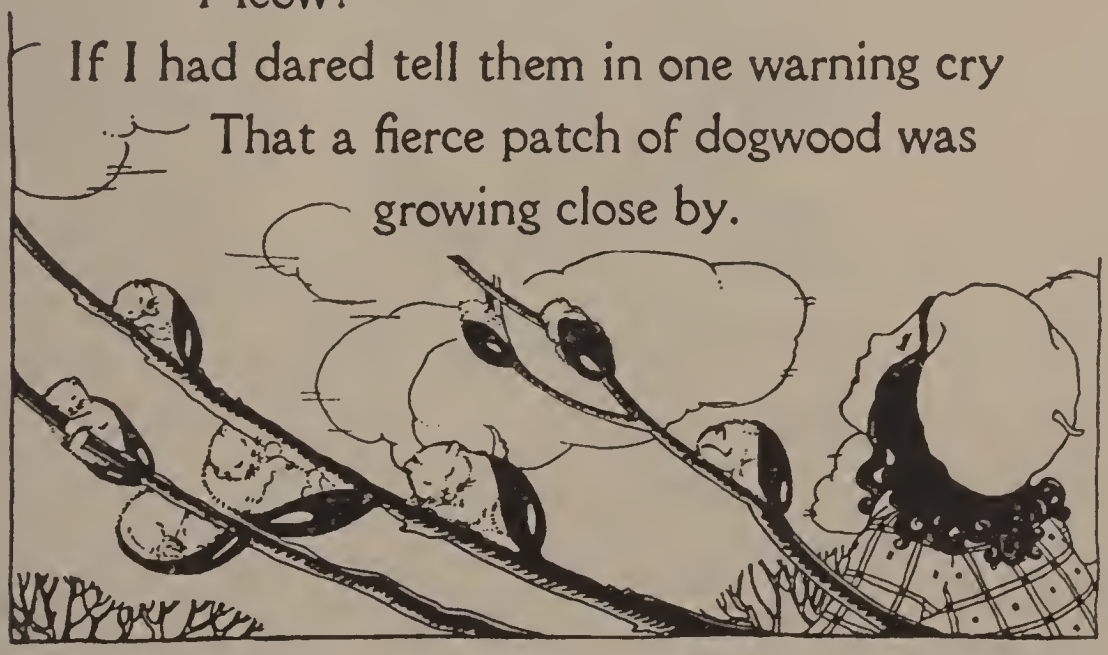
So the tulips all came
in their dresses of flame,
And a snowdrop was there
with a star in her hair
To dance at the carnival, Spring.



PUSSY WILLOWS



I came on them yesterday
(merely by chance),
Those newly born pussies, asleep
on a branch;
Each curled up so tight in a fluff of a ball
That I could not see ear-points or tail-tips at all;
But I thought that I heard, when the March wind
was stirring,
A soft little sound like the low note of purring.
I wonder if they would have leaped from their bough
And arched their wee backs with a frightened
"Meow!"
If I had dared tell them in one warning cry
That a fierce patch of dogwood was
growing close by.





DANDELION BUBBLES

Dandelion bubbles,
 Soft and white as down,
The fairies must have blown you
 From out your pipes of brown.

They used the clouds for soap suds,
 Then, tired of their play,
They left you on your pipe stems
 For the wind to blow away.
A young breeze passed and saw you,
 And, feeling in a huff,
He burst you, pretty bubbles,
 With but a single puff;
But fairy breath is magic,
 And I've heard a whisper say
Your million scattered fragments
 Will turn to gold some day.





WIND-SHOD

If I had shoes like the shoes of the wind,
 I should walk on the top of the sea,
And the little mermaidens would lift their heads
 And throw a kiss to me;
But no one should stay my hurrying feet,
For the shoes of the wind are fleet.

If I had shoes like the shoes of the wind,
 I should scamper along the grass,
And all would wonder to hear me come
 But none should see me pass;
For the shoes of the wind are magic shoes
And would make me invisible should I choose.

If I had shoes like the shoes of the wind,
 I should leap to the sky with a bound
And shuffle the little white clouds about
 Till the rain fell on the ground;
And oh, I should do such wonderful things,
For the shoes of the wind have wings!



PAN

The little god, Pan,
Had the face of a man
And the feet of a goat,
Had the little god, Pan.



He lived in the world
When first it began;
An odd little god
Was the little one, Pan.



Oh, the merry god, Pan!
How he capered and ran
On his little goat-feet;
But he laughed like a man.



He laughed as he leaped
Through the ferns and the brakes;
He laughed as he danced
By the shores of the lakes.



He danced and he played
On the pipes that he made
From a reed, till he freed
Echoes, shrill, from the hill;



And the rill gaily swayed
To the music he made,
And the wind as it blew
Caught the melody, too.



Oh, the merry god, Pan!
How he danced as he ran
On his little goat-feet,
To the song of a man!



Oh, the wistful god, Pan!
When winds rose to fan
The flame of the sunset,
And stars woke to span
The hollow of heaven—
His dreaming began.

He sat very still
By the edge of the stream
On his little goat-haunches—
And what was his dream?



Alas, I can't tell you!
And nobody can;
But somehow I think
'Twas the dream of a MAN.







CLOUDS

The clouds are birds that nest among the stars.
They do not sing,
but sleep with folded wing
Until the wind breaks through the shining bars
Of morning, crying, "Come!"
Then, slowly, one by one,
They wake and fly
Across the sky.



ADVENTURE

A runaway road passes grandfather's gate
And scampers away to the lea.
I say to it, "Please, little road, won't you wait?"
But it only cries, "Come, follow me!"
The gate whispers, "Stay!"
and the swing cries out, "Play!"
But the runaway road just scampers away,
And I'm so bewitched that I burst into laughter
And leap the low fence to go merrily after.

I've followed before; so of course the road knows me,
And there is no end to the secrets it shows me;
A meadowlark's nest that every one passes
Because it is hidden so safe in the grasses;
A cave in the hillside for brownies to play in;
A nook in the forest for violets to stay in,
For jack-in-the-pulpits to linger and pray in;
The haunt of a wood sprite in yonder tree's hollow
And, high on the cliff side, the home of the swallow.

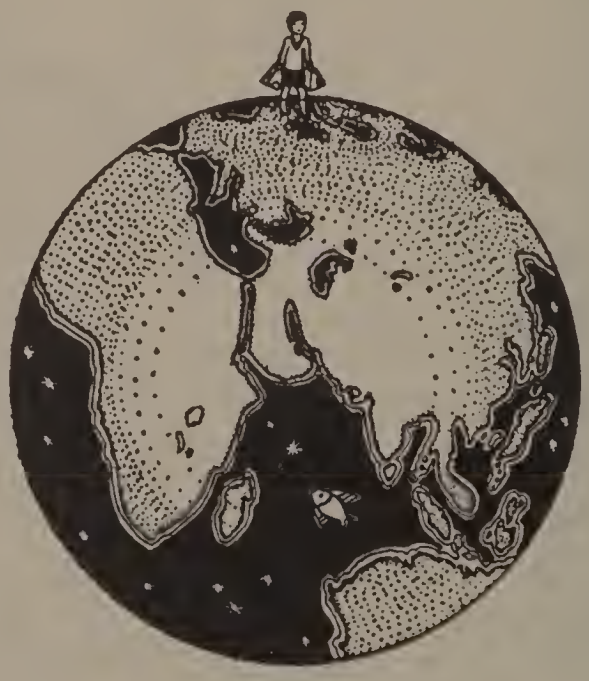
And still the road beckons, and still do I follow,
Till, all wearied out, I sit down on a stile,



And, oh, it is pleasant to rest there a while!
But the tireless road hurries happily on
Until at the turning it's suddenly gone.

Oh, if it were not for my grandmother's worrying
I'd travel right on though I'm tired of hurrying;
I'd see what's behind every twisting and bending
Until I had followed the road to its ending!
And where does it lead, do you really suppose?
Perhaps into Fairyland; nobody knows.

But when I'm grown up I shall find where it goes—
Shall follow and see all its wonders unfurled.
It will lead me adventuring over the world!





MAKING A RAINBOW

Run, clouds, run;
Hide the shining sun.
Bump your curly heads together
For we want some rainy weather,
Just for fun.

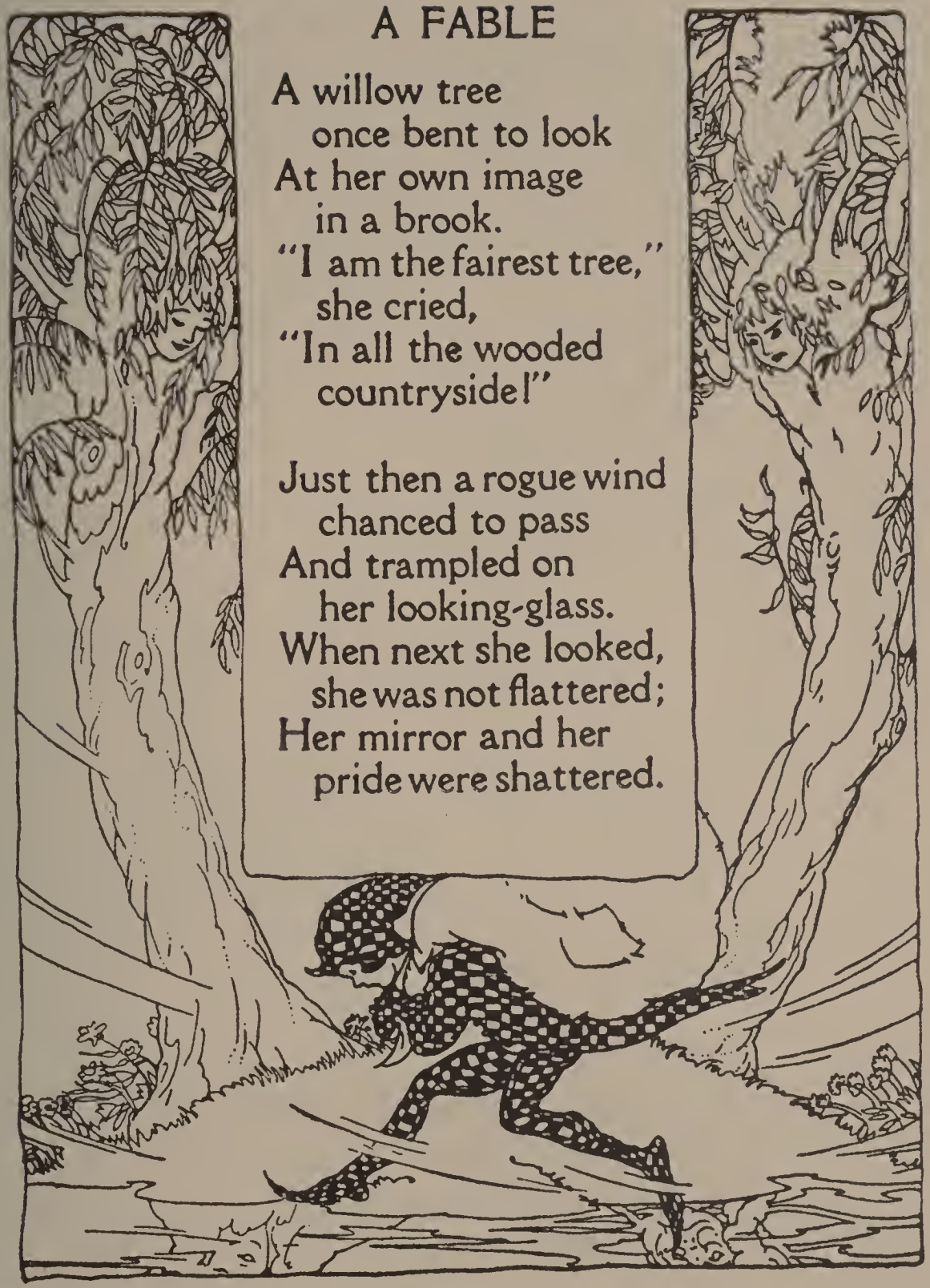
Blow, wind, blow;
Make the dark clouds go.
When you have unveiled the sun
And the little storm is done,
Bend your bow.
Bend your bow of many hues,
Golds and indigos and blues;
Then walk off on quiet shoes.
Go, wind, go.

MRS. C.

(OR ANY OTHER TOO PRACTICAL PERSON.)

She never met a fairy,
 She never knew a gnome,
And if she were to travel
 From Labrador to Rome,
The wee folk, the good folk,
 The pixies and the elves,
Would only look askance at her
 And titter to themselves.
And if, in some deserted spot,
 They took her by surprise,
She'd only blame her spectacles
 Or rub her doubting eyes,
And say she'd got the dust in them.
 Oh, she can knead good bread
And bake it light, and in the night
 Work patterns with fine thread;
But her knowledge of the fairy folk
 Is sadly limited.





A FABLE

A willow tree
once bent to look
At her own image
in a brook.
"I am the fairest tree,"
she cried,
"In all the wooded
countryside!"

Just then a rogue wind
chanced to pass
And trampled on
her looking-glass.
When next she looked,
she was not flattered;
Her mirror and her
pride were shattered.

SHELL CASTLES



A sea shell is a castle
Where a million echoes roam,
 A wee castle,
 Sea castle,
Tossed up by the foam;
 A wee creature's,
 Sea creature's,
Long deserted home.



If I were very tiny,
 I should walk those winding halls
And listen to the voices
 In the pink and pearly walls;
And each mysterious echo
 Would tell me salty tales
Of the phosphorescent fishes
And the white-winged ship that sails
 On the sea's brim
 Round the earth's rim
To the lilting of the gales;





Of the sea horse
That's a wee horse
And frolics in the sea
'Neath the coral
White and sorrel
That is the mermaids' tree;
And grazes on the seaweed
And the sea anemone;



But my ears cannot distinguish
The words it sings to me,
The sea shell,
The wee shell,
I hold so reverently,
And I only hear a whisper
Like the ghost voice of the sea.

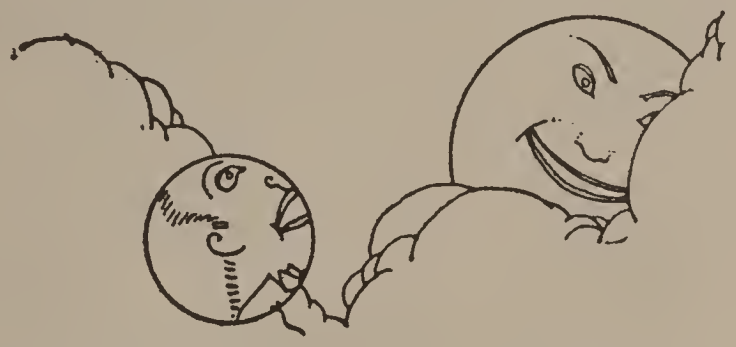




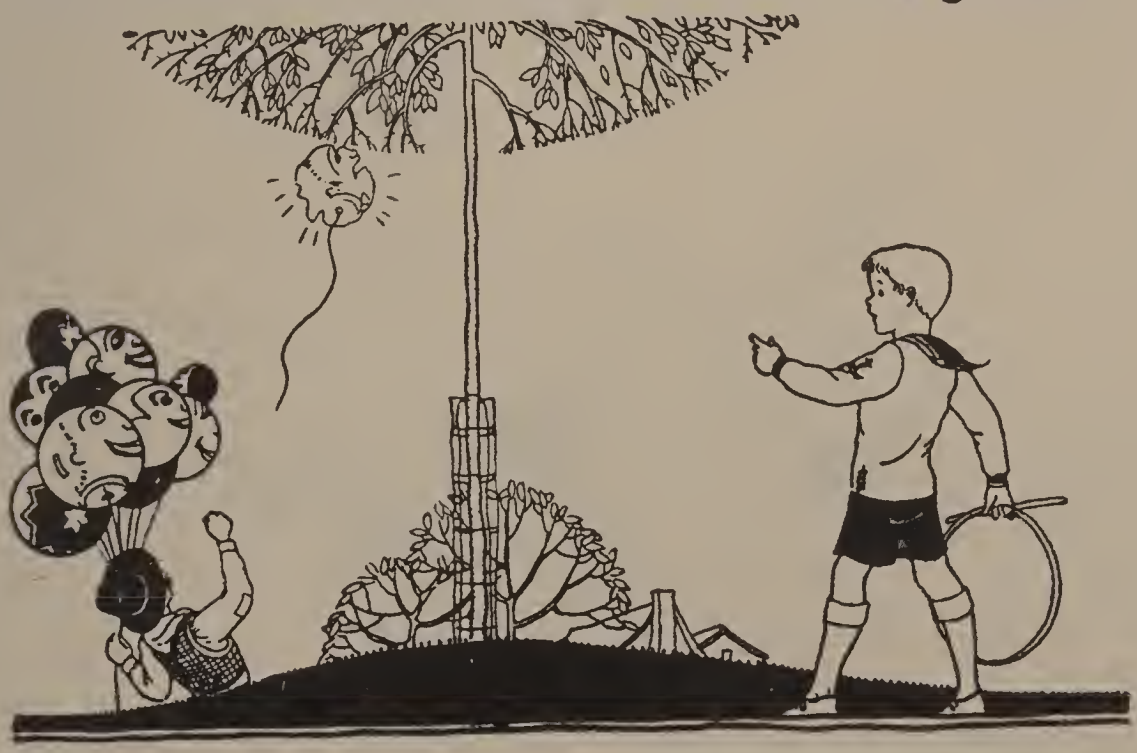
THE CRIMSON BALLOON

The crimson balloon was a headstrong young thing;
He jostled his brothers and tugged at his string
And said to his master, "Let go of my tail,
And over the tops of the houses I'll sail.

I'll ride on a cloud and I'll visit the moon
(He is nothing himself but a silver balloon).
I'll bump him down into this crookedy street
And shine in his place with the world at my feet."



Just then came the wind with a cough and a sneeze
That blew him up into the pin-cushion trees
Where, BANG! he collapsed with a terrible sound
And wizened and shriveled, he sank to the ground.



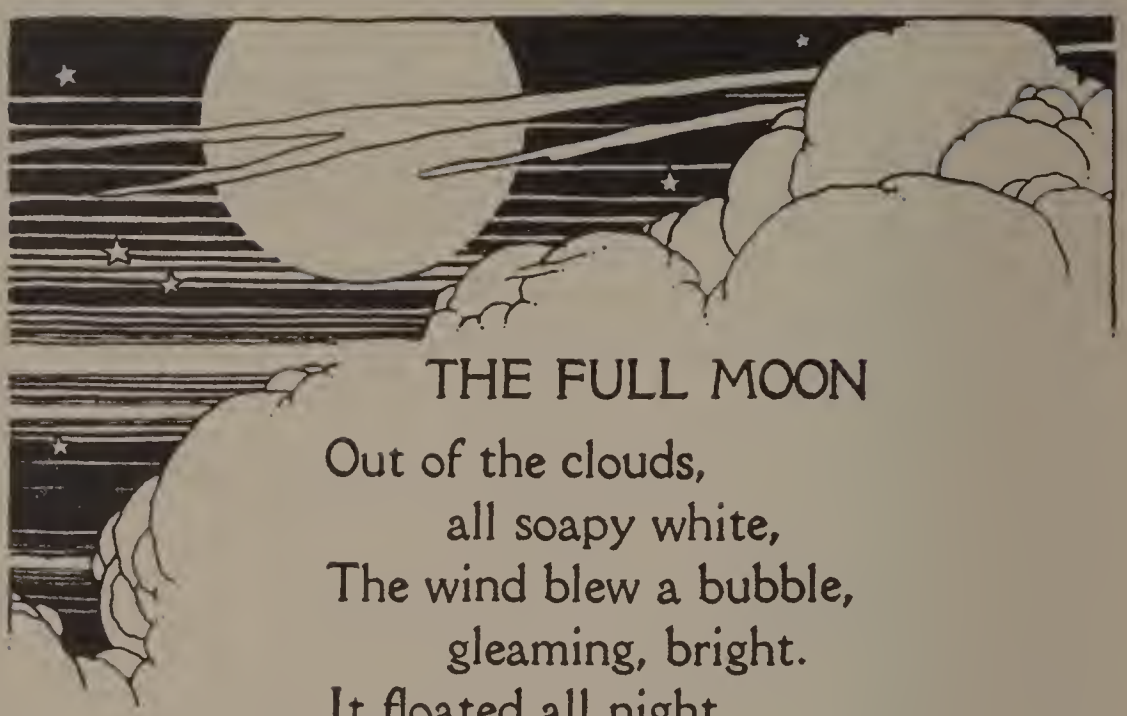
THE SAND CASTLE

I built a golden castle
In the sand upon the shore
And I hung a silver sea shell
For a trumpet by the door;
And my castle was so splendid
That the wind, in passing by,
Walked on tiptoe, lest he crush it
And the sea birds, sailing high,
Paused a moment, just to see it,
For there had not been before
Such a stately golden castle
In the sand upon the shore;



But the sea became an ogre
 Who rose and trampled o'er
Wall and rampart, moat and drawbridge
 Of my castle on the shore,
And I even heard him laughing
 With a kind of guttural sound
As he hastily retreated
 From that drab and shapeless mound.

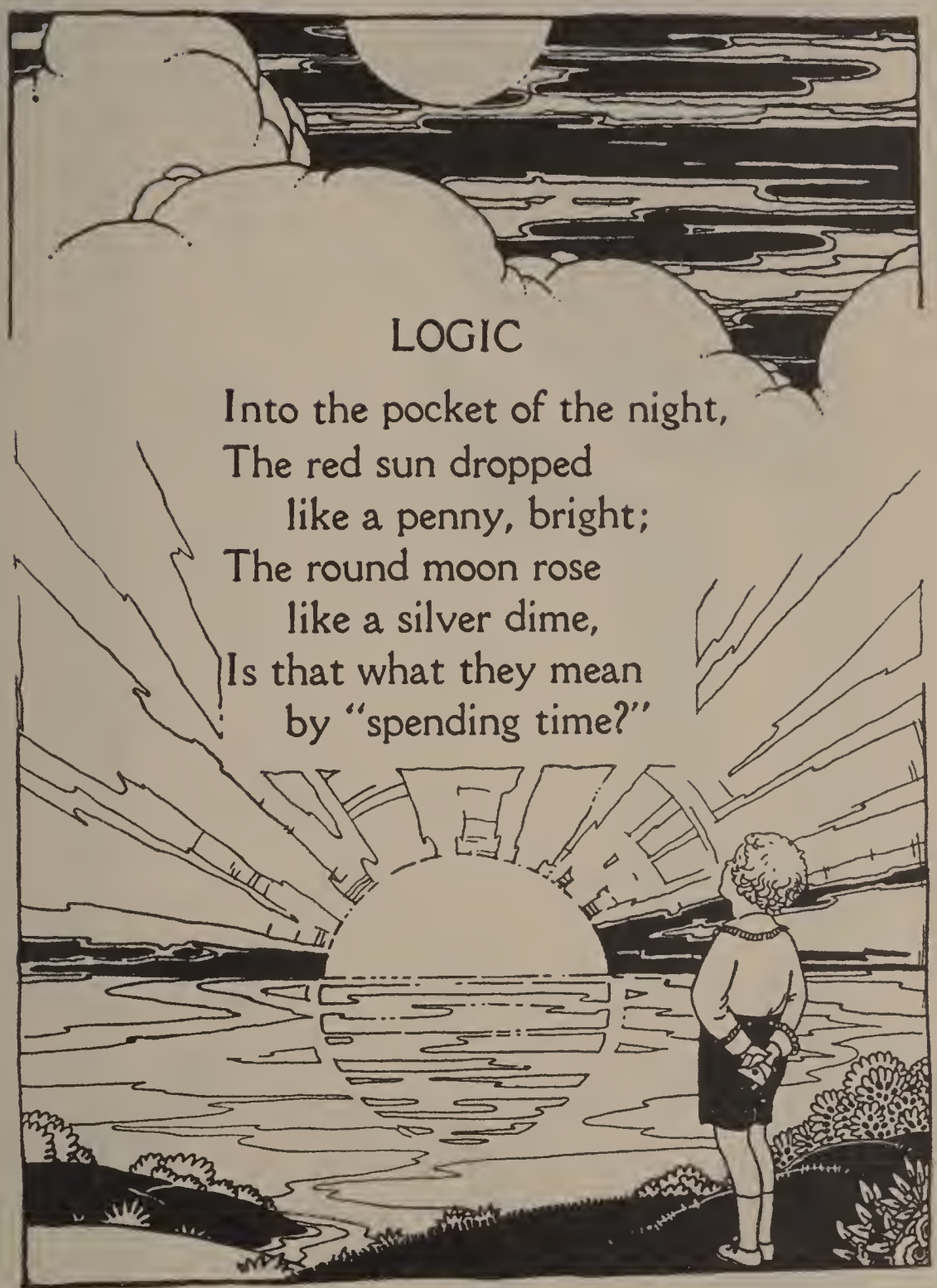
Then I took my tiny trumpet
 And I thought me of a rune
That an ancient book had taught me,
 And I sang it to the tune
Of a witch song, for I realized
 Only magic could disarm
Such an ogre; and an hour
 Proved the power of my charm.
For the tide slipped down to nothing,
 And I heard a muffled roar
In the little silver sea shell
 That had graced my castle door.
I had quite transformed that ogre
 By the magic of my spell,
And he roared, a midget captive,
 In the hollow of my shell.



THE FULL MOON

Out of the clouds,
all soapy white,
The wind blew a bubble,
gleaming, bright.
It floated all night
in the bowl of the sky
And burst when the first cock
woke to cry.





LOGIC

Into the pocket of the night,
The red sun dropped
 like a penny, bright;
The round moon rose
 like a silver dime,
Is that what they mean
 by "spending time?"



LADY SLEEP

Sleep walks over the hill,
A lady fair and frail.
When evening mists are chill,
When the early moon is pale,
Sleep walks over the hill.

Her hair is like a veil
And her feet are shadow-still.
The flowers close their eyes
When sleep walks over the hill.

She is beautiful and wise,
And the lonely places fill
With a hush that is deeper than sighs
When sleep walks over the hill.

Sleep walks in at the door,
And the leaping fire dies,
And the little lights go out
Like tired fireflies,
And the house-dog curls on the floor
When sleep walks in at the door.

Sleep walks in at the door
And she neither speaks nor sings,
But her breath is sweeter than song
And folded are her wings;
And the children play no more
When sleep walks in at the door.



NIGHT

Night is a giant gardener
 Who does his work on high;
His black soil is the darkness,
 His garden is the sky.
The four winds are his shovel,
 The stars, his scattered seeds;
And when the clouds go blowing by
 He's digging up his weeds.
He pulls the moon up by the roots,
 And when his work is done
There blooms one great, big flower
 That people call THE SUN.



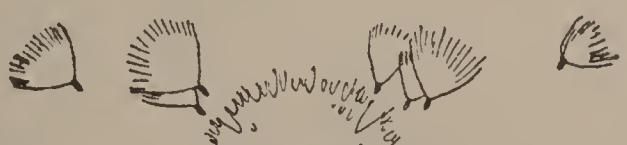


AN AUTUMN PLAY DAY

Oh, Mother, may I go and play?
For all the world is playing;
The little leaves have run away,
And I can see them straying
In crimson shoes across the lawn,
Or practicing balleting.



The shadows play at hide and seek
Between the rows of stubble,
And every thistle stem has blown
A white and foamy bubble.



Around their holes the little moles
All play at blind man's buffing;
The wind is turning somersaults
With panting and with puffing.

The chipmunks play a light croquet
And scamper through the thickets,
With partridge berries for their balls
And bended twigs for wickets.



A dozen squirrels with tails in curls
And feet both swift and nimble
Have found a little acorn cup
For playing hide the thimble.



I would run and join the fun
Without the least delaying;
Please, Mother, let me go and play,
For all the world is playing.

RUNAWAY RIVER

CHILD:

"Runaway river, oh, why are you running,
 Running and sunning yourself as you go?
Why do you dartle and quiver and startle
 The silver-scaled fish that are sleeping below?
Why do you hurry and scamper and scurry
 Over the hill in a torrent of foam?
Are you not grieving to think you are leaving
 The beautiful mountain that once was your home?

RIVER:

"I go to the ocean, the infinite ocean,
 The god of all rivers that beckons to me;
There to be schooled in the music of motion
 There to grow fair in the light of the sea—
Golden by sunlight and silver by moonlight,
 Gray in the dawning and blue in the eve,
I shall be part of the wonder of wonders.
 Why should I hesitate, why should I grieve
At leaving my home-land, no matter how sweet?
 For I shall grow wise 'neath the dome of the skies
With the moon at my breast and the stars at my feet.

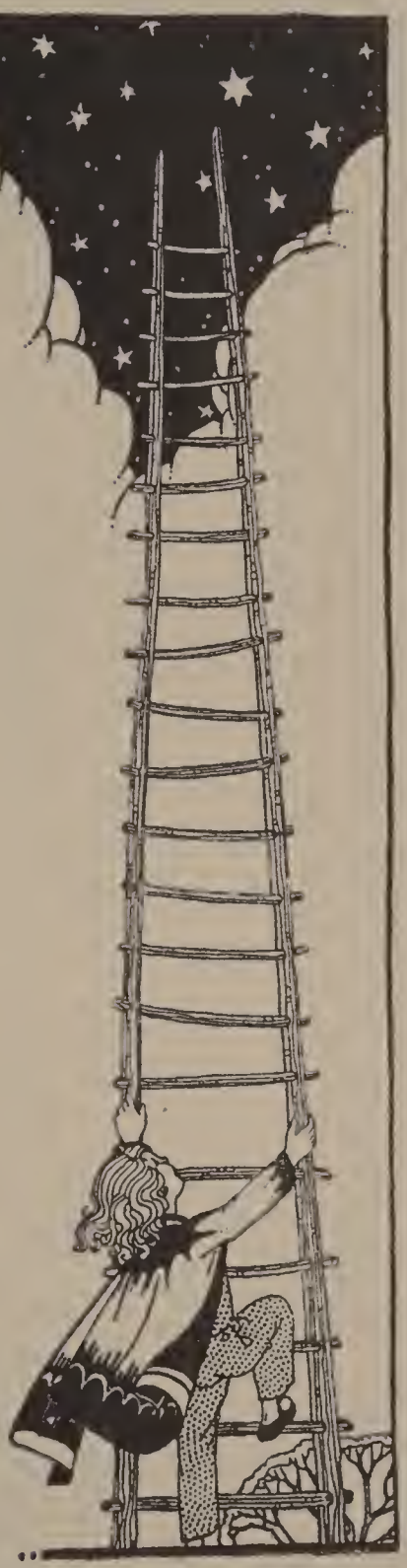




BOATS

The steamboat is a slow poke,
 You simply cannot rush him.
The sailboat will not move at all
 Without a wind to push him;

But the speed boat, with his sharp red nose,
 Is quite a different kind;
He tosses high the spray and leaves
 The other boats behind.



FINDING A DREAM

Where shall I find
a beautiful dream?
In the moon's cupboard.
But how shall I scheme
To capture the moon?
In the net of a tree.
How open the cupboard
without any key?
Build you a ladder,
a ladder of sleep,
And when you have climbed it,
pluck from the deep
Basin of heaven
the reddest of stars.
THIS is the key
that unfastens the bars
Of ALL the moon's cupboards,
so choose for yourself
The rosiest dream
from the rosiest shelf.



A BROWNIE IN A MOUSE TRAP

I set a little mouse trap
 To catch a little mouse,
For I had heard a scuffling
Of little feet a-shuffling
 About my quiet house.
So—I set a little mouse trap
 To catch a little mouse.

But when the daylight flickered
Across my window sill,
And little winds came rustling
Through trees where birds were
bustling,
Or singing gay and shrill,
I rose to greet the morning
And then—what should I see!
A Brownie in my mouse trap—
Oh, goodness, gracious me!
I'd caught him by his coat-tails,
I'd caught him by his shoe—
He shook his little fists at me.
Alas, what could I do?
Too late I had discovered
That it was not a mouse
That visited me nightly
And tiptoed, oh, so lightly
About my quiet house.



I hurried to release him—
 He was too quick for me;
With one heroic struggle
 He wrenched his body free.
He leapt upon the window-sill
 (Now golden with the day)
And like the dandelion down
 He blew himself away.
I kept his little coat-tails,
 I kept his little shoe,
The one, it was a maple leaf,
The other, a carnation sheaf
 (The tiniest that grew.)

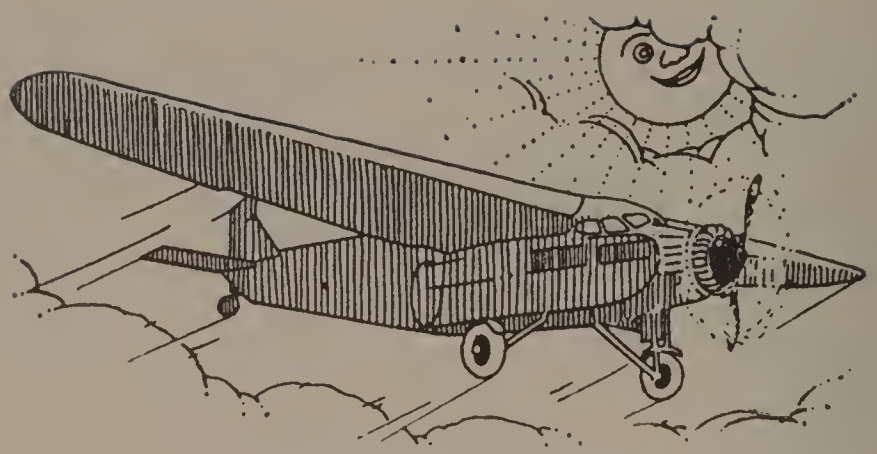


Since then I have not seen him
 In coat-tails or in blouse;
But should I hear a scuffling
Of little feet a-shuffling
 About my quiet house,
I would not set a mouse trap
 To catch a little mouse.



SHOON

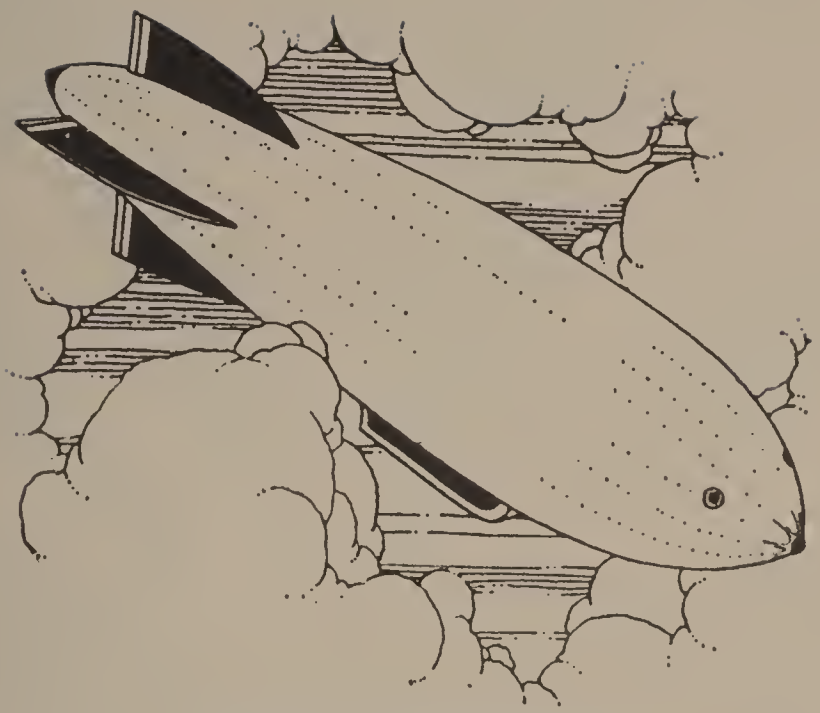
The frost wears silver slippers;
The rain wears mouse-gray shoes;
But the ragged wind goes barefoot
And wades in shining dews.



THE AIRPLANE

An airplane has gigantic wings
 But not a feather on her breast;
She only mutters when she sings
 And builds a hangar for a nest.
I love to see her stop and start;
She has a little motor heart
That beats and throbs and then is still.
She wears a fan upon her bill.

No eagle flies through sun and rain
So swiftly as an airplane.
I wish she would come swooping down
Between the steeples of the town
And lift me right up off my feet
And take me high above the street,
That all the other boys might see
The little speck that would be me.



THE ZEPPELIN

The Zeppelin, the Zeppelin!
 He has a fish's tail
And fish's nose, so I suppose
 He does not need a sail.

The Zeppelin, the Zeppelin!
 He is a flying fish.
The foaming clouds break over him,
 The little breezes swish
Against him like the sea waves.
 Oh, how he loves to swim
Across the sky, and some day I
 Shall take a ride on him.

SKY HARBOR



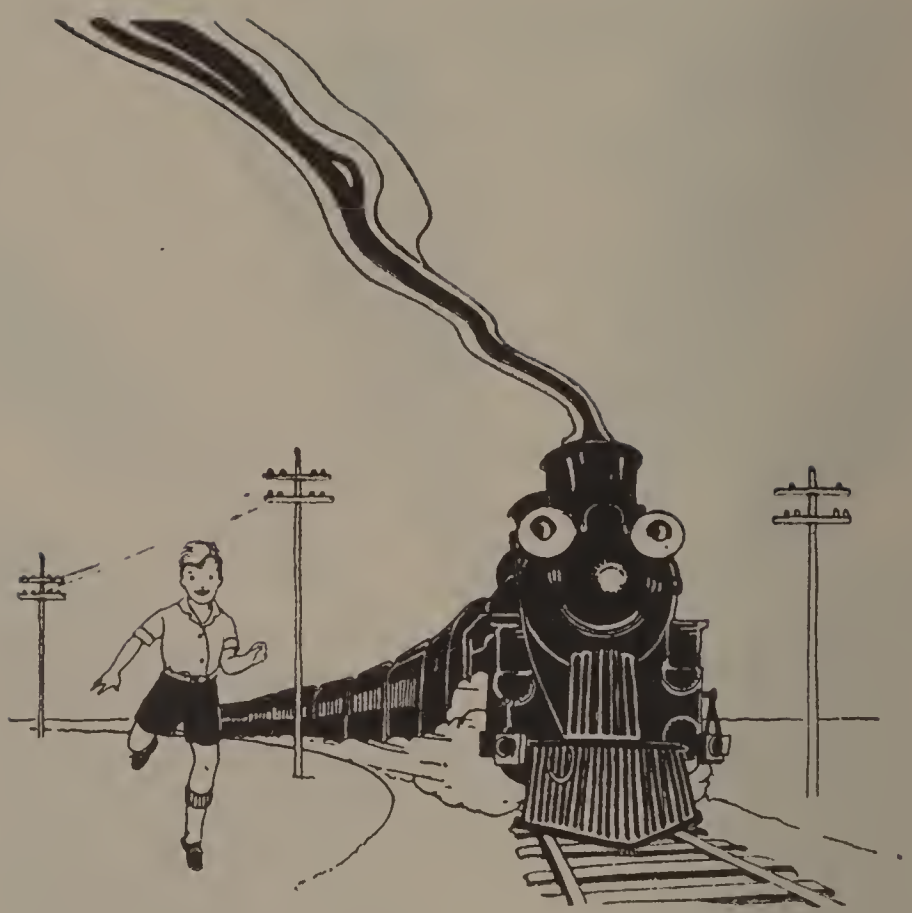
There's a tower at Sky Harbor,
And the tower wears a light
That all the singing planes may find
Their way to port at night.



They come like homing pigeons,
They come from East and West,
The light is like a mother bird
That calls them to the nest.







RACING THE TRAIN

I race him down the platform,
The puffing, snorting train.
He takes so long at starting
That it's not hard to gain
At first, but when his steam is up
He's haughty as can be;
He chuckles hoarsely to himself
Because he's passing me.

SPINNING THE TOP

Spin, Top! Spin!
My string is white and thin;
You are red and stout;
I'll wind you all about
And toss you on your pin.
Spin, Top! Spin!

Spin, Top! Spin!
You sing when you begin,
But when you're tired out
You wabble all about.
Spin, Top! Spin!





ON HALLOWE'EN

Who would ride a broomstick
 As the witches do—
Straight across the pebbly stars
 On a street of blue?
I should! I should!
 (If mother came, too).

Who would take a wildcat
With eyes all yellow-green
To ride upon his broomstick
Late on Hallowe'en?
I should! I should!
(If mother sat between).



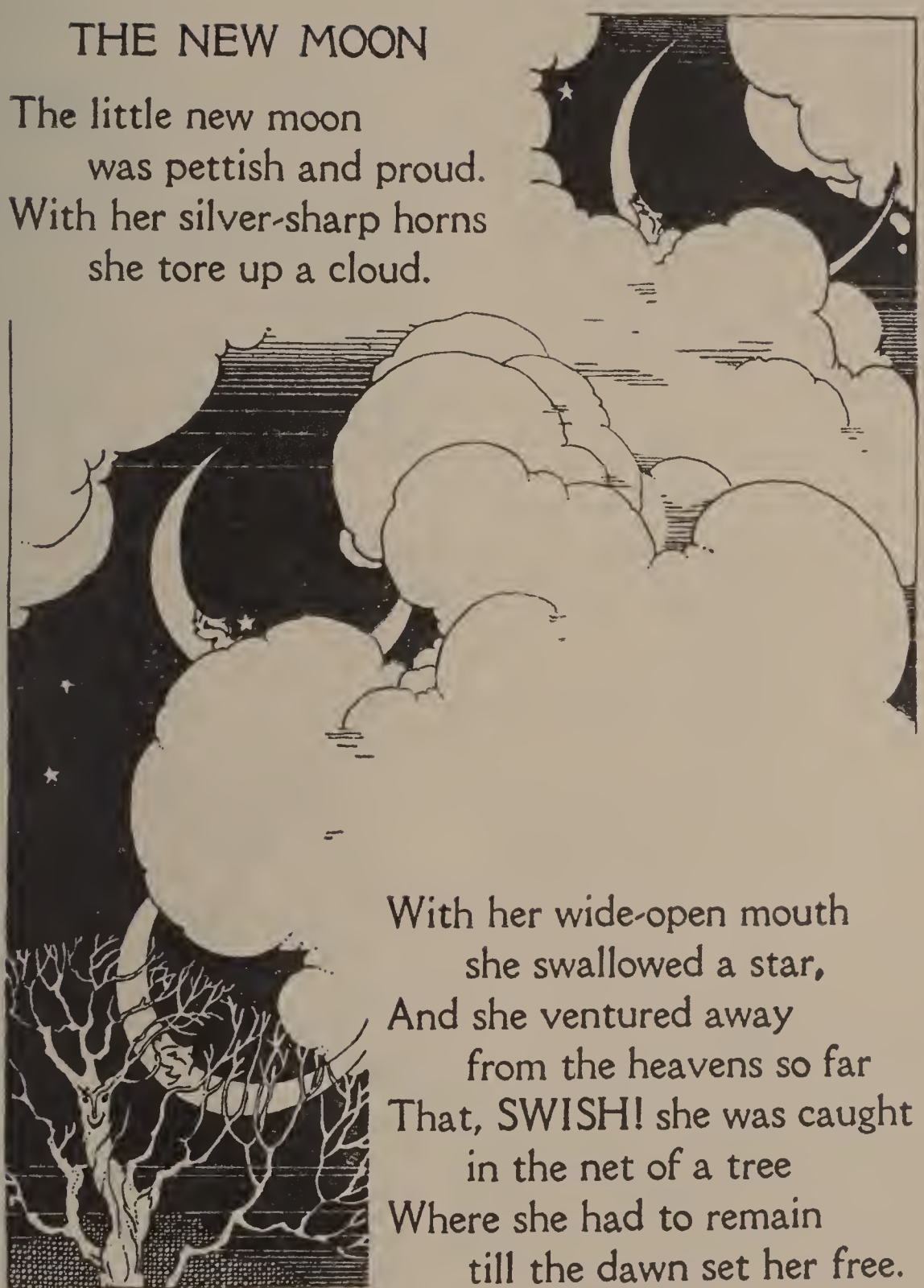
BROOMSTICK-TIME

On Hallowe'en the witches fly
Like withered leaves across the sky,
Each with a broomstick for a steed
That gallops at tremendous speed.
Although I don't approve of witches
Who wear tall hats and live in ditches,
Still I am glad there is a day
When broomsticks have a chance to play.



THE NEW MOON

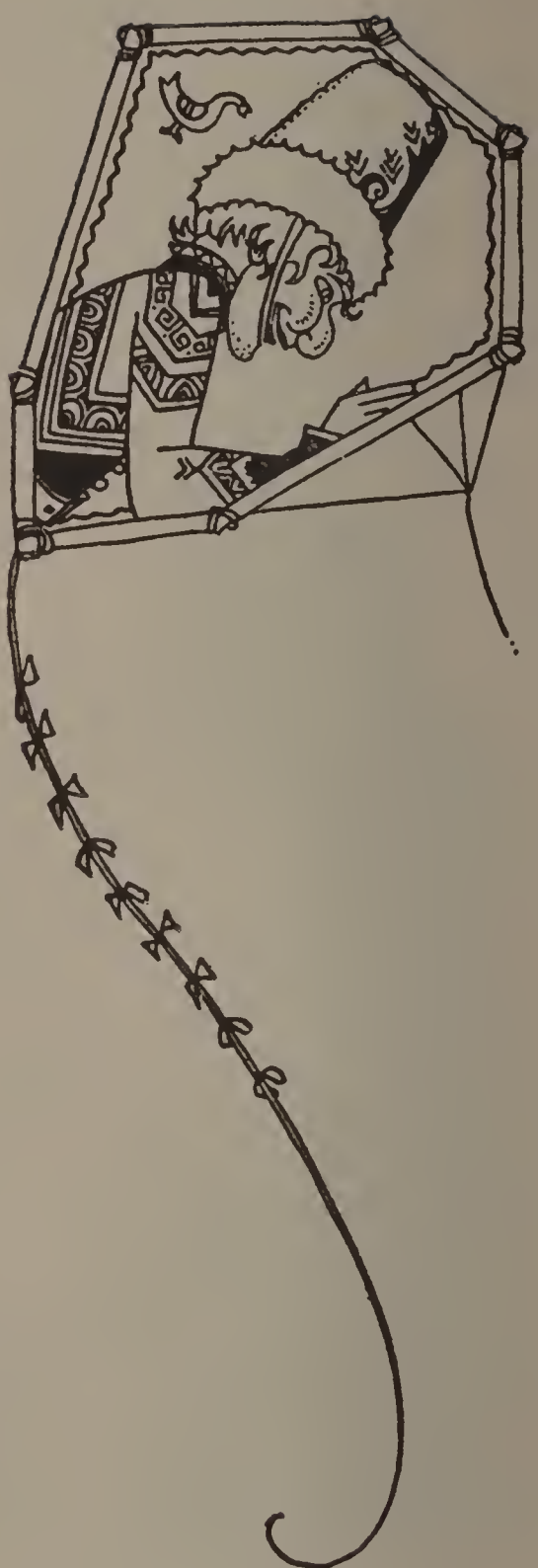
The little new moon
was pettish and proud.
With her silver-sharp horns
she tore up a cloud.



With her wide-open mouth
she swallowed a star,
And she ventured away
from the heavens so far
That, SWISH! she was caught
in the net of a tree
Where she had to remain
till the dawn set her free.

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE KITE

FROM A RUSSIAN FABLE

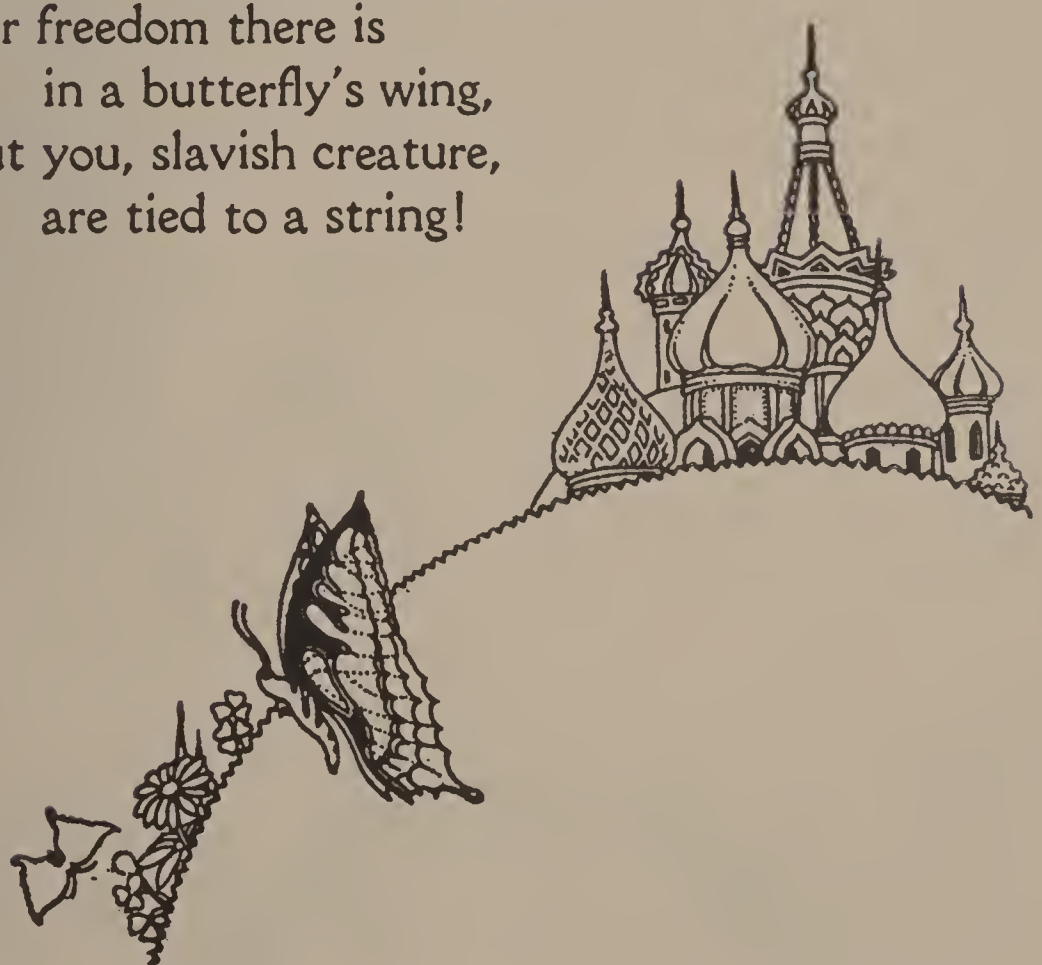


KITE:

Oh, I am a kite
 with a face and a tail!
I fly without wings
 at the front of the gale;
Over the trees
 and the housetops I sail,
For I am a kite
 with a hood and a tail.
See that poor butterfly
 down in the clover,
Beating her fragile wings
 over and over;
Hello, Butterfly,
 don't you wish you were I
Sporting about in the blue
 of the sky?

BUTTERFLY:

Hello, foolish Kite;
 why, of course it is true
That from such a height
 you've a beautiful view;
It must be delightful
 up there in the blue,
Yet I should not care
 to change places with you;
For freedom there is
 in a butterfly's wing,
But you, slavish creature,
 are tied to a string!



A LULLABY FOR CAROLYN

Sleep, pretty Carolyn, lullaby, sleep—
All little creatures that flutter or creep
Out in the sunlight have now gone to sleep.
All little creatures that sleep the day long
Waken to sing you a beautiful song,
Waken to join me with chirping and cheep
In a "Sleep, pretty Carolyn, lullaby, sleep."

Rest, pretty Carolyn, slumber and rest—
A dream clad in crimson comes out of the west,
A dream from the moon in silver comes dressed
Singing,
"Rest, pretty Carolyn, slumber and rest."

Hush, pretty Carolyn, hushaby, hush—
The wind travels by in slippers of plush,
Stepping so lightly no flower to crush,
Singing so sweetly, "Hush, Carolyn, hush!"







A CONVERSATION WITH JACK-IN-THE-BOX



CHILD:

Jack-in-the-Box, you're a dashing young fellow,
Dressed in your jacket of scarlet and yellow;
Your bow is most courtly, your wit is beguiling;
I never have seen you when you were not smiling.
Then tell me, dear Jack, is there truth in the rumor
That you are so rapt in your own sense of humor
That you are content to be shut in a box
With walls that are dark and a cover that locks?
That you are content to wait long hours through
All for the moment when, leaping to view,
You may startle us children by shouting out, "Boo!"?



JACK:

Dear child, I am supple and light as a bubble
And really don't mind being bent nearly double;
But as I'm considered both handsome and gallant
I have no intention of wasting my talent.
When you and your brothers and sisters are sleeping,
And moonlight and shadow are stealthily creeping
Into the nursery—'tis then I come leaping
Out of my box, with a laugh that is hearty,
And rally the dolls for a wonderful party.
You should see my feet as they merrily twinkle
Over the floor to the jingle and tinkle
Of your little music-box, magically playing;
You should see the other dolls dancing and swaying—
The rag-doll who moves with considerable flopping,
The little toy rabbit who dances by hopping,
The stiff wooden soldier, the limp paper dolly—
All make up a party decidedly jolly;
But I am, of course, the most graceful of all.
I lead the grand march, and the belle of the ball
(A lovely wax lady from over the sea)
Is flattered to dance with a partner like me,
Till the barking of dogs and the crowing of cocks
Sends her to her pillow and me to my box.

SNOW

The snow is a bird, soft-feathered and white.
Silent and graceful is her flight
As she swoops to earth and spreads her wings
Over the beautiful unborn things:
Seeds and bulbs that soon will tower
Out of the nest of the ground, and flower.





A MODERN DRAGON

A train is a dragon that roars through the dark.
He wriggles his tail as he sends up a spark.
He pierces the night with his one yellow eye,
And all the earth trembles when he rushes by.

DREAM TOYS

A little dream child in a little red dress
Walks out of the sunset's loveliness
And tiptoes her way through the nursery door
And scatters her playthings all over the floor;
A ball made of silver, clean-cut from the moon,
A cricket's wee fiddle, a shadow balloon
That drifts to the ceiling; and ribbons of stars
She ties to the curtains or flings on the bars
Of somebody's bed; a fairy's lost fan,
A whistle the wind made, but dropped as he ran,
And even a dream-horse with one hobby-hoof,
Who leaps through the window to prance on the roof.
All of these things, and a great many more,
The dream child drops down on the carpeted floor.
Then she calls to the girls and she calls to the boys
Asleep in the nursery, "Come, play with my toys.
All night I shall leave them, all night you may play,
But when it is morning I'll take them away."





COME, RIDE WITH ME TO TOYLAND



Come, ride with me to Toyland,
 For this is Christmas Eve,
And just beyond the Dream Road
 (Where all is make-believe)
There lies a truly Toyland,
A real and wondrous Joyland,
A Little-Girl-and-Boy Land,
 Too lovely to conceive!



There Christmas fairies plant a tree
 That blossoms forth in stars
And comes to fruit in sugarplums;
There dolls and balls and painted drums
 And little trains of cars
All stand and wait for you and me
Beneath the shining wonder-tree.

So saddle up your hobby horse
And ride across the night.
The thundering of our coursers' hoofs
Will put the moon to flight;
And when the east is kitten-gray
We'll sight that wondrous Joyland,
And at the break of Christmas Day
We'll gallop into Toyland!



VALENTINE PEOPLE

There was a lovely ladykin,
No bigger than a minute,
Who sat and played a minuet
Upon a tiny spinet;
Her hair was powdered white as snow,
She wore a dress of long ago
With satin flowers in it.
She lived upon a valentine
Behind a paper shutter,
And, though she played so charmingly,
Her spinet did not utter
A single sound; but as she sat
Her heart was all a-flutter,
For just outside her window
Stood a cavalier in yellow,
He was a very handsome and
A chivalrous young fellow.
He stood with tricorn hat in hand,
In attitude most charming,
And listened to the music with
A rapture quite alarming,
Considering no music stirred
Except the soft repeating



Of his own heart, which played a tune
In very rapid beating.
"Alas," thought he, " 'tis blasphemy
To blame one's own creator,
And mine a lady artist, too;
But truly, I do hate her!
To think that she should have the heart
To paint us two so far apart!

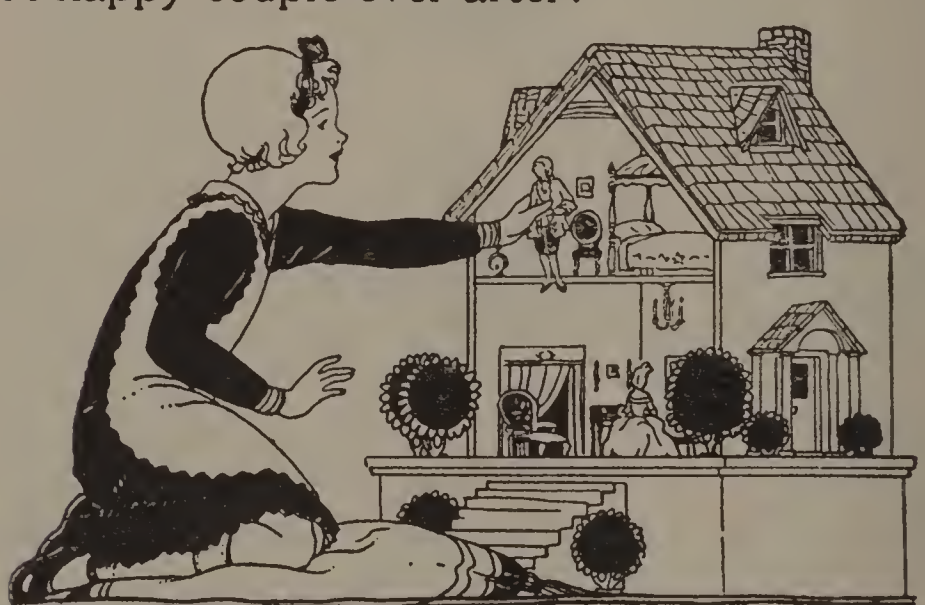
It really would have done no harm
To draw the lady on my arm;
But there she is, inside the folder,
And through the window I behold her,
Yet cannot go and get acquainted;
My knees are far too stiffly painted,
And it would be my own undoing
Were I to shout my words of wooing."
And so he stood with pulses burning
The while the lady sat in yearning,
And so they might have stayed forever
If fate had not been quite so clever.

One day there came with skip and hop
A laddie to the ten-cent shop
And bought the very valentine

Whereon the lovers seemed to pine.
He sealed it up, the reckless scamp,
And mailed it with a postage stamp.
The postman took it to the gate
Of Mary Jane, a lass of eight.
You should have seen her two eyes shine
When she beheld that valentine!
And, being equal to her years,
She promptly went to fetch the shears.
Then, with a most triumphant shout,
She cut our lovely lady out.



Her mother sighed and gently told her
It was a shame to spoil the folder;
But Mary thought it was no folly
To have so nice a paper dolly,
And straightway trimmed the cavalier
(Her scissors just escaped his ear
And made some rather awkward slips
Across his manly finger tips).
And, though this was of course a trial,
He bore it with a beaming smile,
For now his barrier was scissored,
And Mary, like a knowing wizard,
The couple to her dolls' house carried
And in great splendor had them married.
And there they lived in love and laughter,
A happy couple ever after!



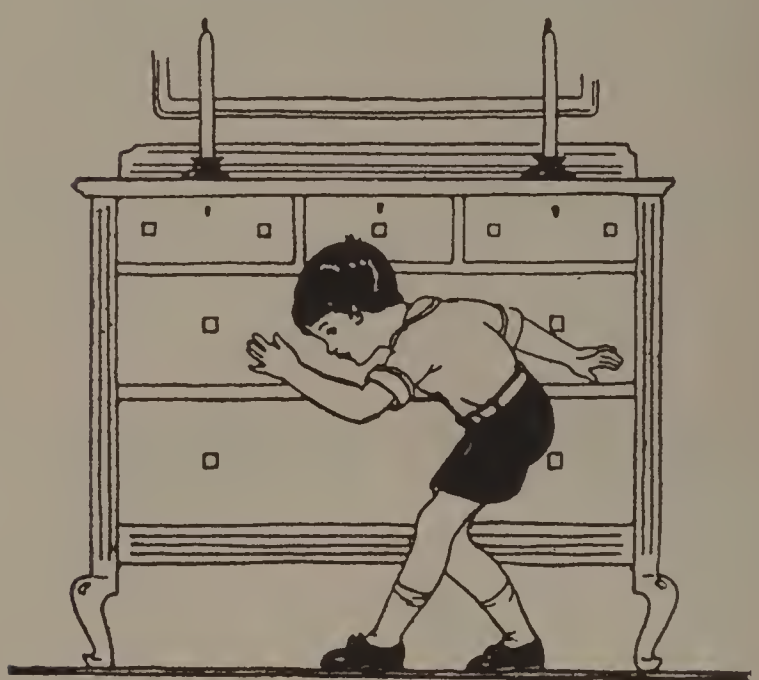
THE FALLING STAR

I saw a star fall out of bed
(Foolish little sleepy head!)
She kicked off her cloudy quilt
And her cradle gave a tilt;
The purple blankets of the night
Were not tucked about her tight,
So she fell, her golden hair
Streaming after, through the air.
I'd hate to be a star and fall
Where there is no floor at all.



CLOCKS AND WATCHES

Clocks can never hide from me,
Because the stupid dears
Click their little tongues so much,
I find them with my ears.



When Daddy says, "Please bring my watch,"
I tiptoe through the door
And listen at the keyhole
Of every bureau drawer.
I find it by the noise it makes.
Watches cannot play
Hide and seek as thimbles can—
They give themselves away.



MOTOR CARS

From a city window, 'way up high,
I like to watch the cars go by.
They look like burnished beetles, black,
That leave a little muddy track
Behind them as they slowly crawl.
Sometimes they do not move at all
But huddle close with hum and drone
As though they feared to be alone.
They grope their way through fog and night
With the golden feelers of their light.

THE FAIRY FEAST IS OVER

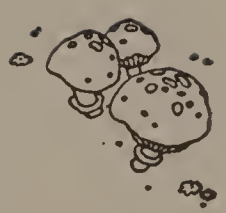


The fairy feast is over now,
 The stars have sputtered out,
And I am left in solitude
 Who dared express a doubt;
I who have often feasted here,
 Beneath the fairy tree,
I am no longer one of them—
 They have deserted me.

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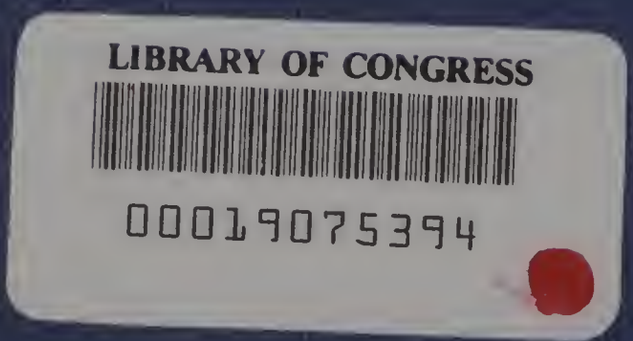
I asked how they could be so old
 And yet so young and wise;
They all drew back and looked at me
 Too stunned to make replies.
I asked how magic could be hid
 Within a foolish rhyme;
They said I'd grown too old for them
 (Who are as old as time).
And still I was not satisfied,
 But begged them to explain
Why fairy laughter rippled like
 The wind across the plain;
Why fairy footsteps sounded like
 The patter of the rain.
They ran away and left me here
 And will not come again.





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